

COMMENTS
OF THE
FEDERAL ECOSYSTEM DIRECTORATE
ON
DRAFT WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN
OF THE
STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

FEBRUARY 23, 1995

I. Opening Statement

Good Morning, I am Roger Patterson, and I will be presenting the comments of the Federal Ecosystem Directorate, otherwise referred to as Club FED, on the draft Water Quality Control Plan. Club FED is made up of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. It was established for coordinating the Federal effort for resolving the environmental problems associated with the Bay-Delta Estuary and the river systems of the Central Valley, and for providing a reliable water supply to users of water from the Delta.

On December 15, the Federal departments and agencies which constitute Club FED were signatories, along with agencies of the State of California, water users, and representatives of environmental organizations of the "Principles for Agreement on Bay-Delta Standards Between the State of California and the Federal Government (Principles)." The draft Water Quality Control Plan (draft Plan) the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) has prepared is a reflection of the standards contained in those Principles.

The Bureau and the Department of Water Resources have agreed to operate the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project in conformance with the Principles for the next 3 years. This is the period in which the State Board will be developing an implementation program for the Water Quality Control Plan. It is expected that this program will address all water right holders in the Central Valley and determine their responsibility to meet the Plan. The Bureau would like to make it clear that it may not be possible or prudent to meet all the standards under all conditions, but we will make our best effort to do so.

The Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service who have responsibility under the Federal Endangered Species Act have or will be modifying the Biological Opinions for winter-run chinook salmon and delta smelt to reflect that the projects will be operating to these standards.

II. Technical Comments

The Club FED agencies have been working with State Board staff and other interested parties to reach agreement upon interpretations of the standards in the draft Plan and the Principles. A number of meetings have been held regarding errata in the draft Plan. This has resulted in an errata sheet that State Board staff has prepared.

There are however several differences between the Principles and the draft Plan. These include:

1. Striped bass water quality standard.
2. Forecast for San Joaquin flows.
3. X2 starting gate.
4. Export limits during San Joaquin River pulse flows.
5. Suisun Marsh standards.

We have been working with the various agencies and interested parties to reach agreement on these particular issues. We believe we are very close to that agreement and either we or one of the CALFED agencies will formally notify the State Board by March 10.

Regarding other general elements of the draft Plan, the Club FED agencies will be participating in the State Board's process to develop an implementation plan for the draft Plan.

The Club FED agencies believe that the recommended actions in the draft Plan have a great deal of merit and should be pursued. To the extent that the authorities under which our agencies operate and our funding allow us to do so, we will undertake such programs.

The Club FED agencies will be working closely with the State agencies and others to develop a monitoring program to address the needs and requirements of the new standards. We believe the Interagency Ecological Program (IEP) is the appropriate vehicle to develop such a monitoring program and that integrated monitoring should be the goal; one that will meet not only the needs of the new standards, but also aid the efforts involved with Central Valley Project Improvement Act implementation and the joint long-term State and Federal Delta planning process.

III. Actions Underway

In order to conform our operations to the new standards, the Bureau and the Department of Water Resources will be submitting shortly to the State Board a petition to modify conditions in Central Valley Project and State Water Project water rights that are inconsistent with conditions imposed by D-1485. We will also be petitioning to have interchangeable use of the projects points of diversion in the Delta. This will allow the projects to optimally utilize Delta diversion facilities to provide environmental benefits and water supply reliability.

IV. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Club FED agencies are firmly committed to the Principles that we signed on December 15. We stand ready to assist the State Board in any way you desire. We will be happy to answer questions.